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His Excellency Mr. Robert G. Mugabe,
President,
Causeway,
Harare
Zimbabwe

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HTUR/JS

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ZCTU arrests

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) representing 168 million unionized workers in 155 countries and territories, I am writing to condemn the arrest and assault on a large number of ZCTU leaders and members, including the arrest of Secretary General **Wellington Chibebe**.

The ITUC has been informed that the ZCTU has organized peaceful marches today to protest against the extreme financial crisis in Zimbabwe by delivering petitions to banks. Mr. Wellington Chibebe and ZCTU President Lovemore Matombo managed to hand the ZCTU petition to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor.

Soon after handing it over, Chibebe proceeded to address workers but was arrested while in the process of addressing the workers. He was arrested together with 9 other people including Tonderai Nyahunzvi, Canwell Muchadya, Hillarious Ruyi, Cde Tarumbira and Joseph Chuma.

Another 10 in Harare were heavily assaulted by the police. These included Getrude Hambira (General Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union - General Secretary), Angeline Chitambo (Zimbabwe Energy Workers' Union - President), Tecla Masamba (Communications and Allied Workers' Union of Zimbabwe), Martha Kajama (National Engineering Workers' Union of Zimbabwe) and Mirriam Katumba (Vice Chair Women's Advisory Council).

Meanwhile, Japhet Moyo (ZCTU Deputy Secretary General) Ben Madzimure (The Worker Editor), Fungayi Kanyongo (The Worker Intern), Raymond Majongwe (Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe - General Secretary), James Gumbi

(Zimbabwe Rural District Council Workers' Union - General Secretary), Osward Madziwa (PTUZ) were also arrested in Harare.

In Gweru more than 25 people have been arrested. Amongst those arrested are the ZCTU Central Regional chair Charles Chikozho, Isaac Thebethebe (Central region secretary), Moses Mhaka and Wilbert Muringani (both PTUZ) and Benard Sibanda.

In Zvishavane town 6 people were arrested while at Barclays Bank. The six are Elinas Gumbo, Ndodana Sithole, Nicholas Zengeya, Isaac Matsikidze, Sarudzai Chimwanda, and David Moyo. They are being held at Zvishavane police station.

In most parts of the country, workers managed to hand in petitions to the RBZ offices.

The ITUC is extremely concerned at the large number of arrests and the manhandling of some of the peaceful protestors. The brutal behavior by police forces in Zimbabwe is unacceptable, and the ITUC calls on your government to guarantee the physical integrity of all who are being detained.

We want to draw your urgent attention to the fact that the Government of Zimbabwe has ratified ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association and the right to organise, and is therefore under an obligation under international law to allow trade unions the right to freedom of assembly. Trade unions have a right to demonstrate peacefully against economic and social policies affecting their members, as they have today. In a situation of dire economic hardship, food shortages and an evolving humanitarian crisis, trade unionists have no choice but to voice their protest against the economic policies that have led to this disaster.

We also want to remind you that the many violations of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining committed by your government has not gone unnoticed.

In accordance with Article 26 of the ILO Constitution, it has been decided to send a Commission of Inquiry to Zimbabwe, with regards to the numerous violations of the right to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in your country. This is a measure which is only adopted in the most serious cases of violation, and the ITUC firmly believes that your government would do well by starting to respect the most fundamental workers' and human rights of your own people.

The international trade union movement will report the new arrests to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, and will call on all of its affiliates to condemn the latest arrests.

The ITUC strongly urges you to immediately release all who have been arrested, including Mr. Wellington Chibabe and to make sure that no charges are made against them. In the meantime, we urge you to guarantee their physical integrity and well-being.

The ITUC hope that you will pay prompt attention to this very serious matter.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary

Cc: The Embassy of Zimbabwe to Belgium